

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I object.

We look forward to having a very healthy and serious debate on this issue in the Armed Services Committee so that we can resolve many claims by both sides about the best way to deal with this.

I think, through Senator GILLIBRAND's great efforts, we have moved a long, long way in terms of addressing the issue of sexual assault through the UCMJ, but there are still significant issues that have to be thoughtfully discussed. In the context of that discussion, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL MARTINEZ

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is Thursday, and it is that time of the week. I know a lot of our reporters in the Senate like this because it is the signal of kind of the end of the workweek here. Of course, it is also a signal that I get to come to the floor and do what is one of my favorite elements about being a U.S. Senator: talking about someone who makes Alaska what I believe to be the greatest State in the country. We call this person our Alaskan of the Week.

Before I get to talking about our Alaskan of the Week—an extraordinary young man named Michael Martinez—let me tell you a little bit about what is going on in Alaska right now.

Today, in Anchorage, the Sun rose at 4:44 a.m., and it will set tonight at 11 p.m. It was light almost all day. Blackout curtains are up, and 12 midnight Sun celebrations are abounding. It is a great time of the year to be in Alaska. You can't believe the energy you feel.

We were recently able to pass a cruise ship bill—and I appreciate the Presiding Officer's doing that a couple of weeks ago—that enables cruise ships to come back to our State this summer. So we are going to have tourists coming, and you should, too, America. If you are watching on C-SPAN, come on up. Alaska is safe. It is beautiful. If it is on your bucket list, make it happen this summer. You will love it. You will see breathtaking scenery and some of the most generous, innovative people in the country. You will not be disappointed. So come on up.

You will be in a State where 21-year-old Michael Martinez, our Alaskan of the Week, was born and raised—one of the many, many reasons I remain optimistic about the state of our State and the state of our country. So let me tell you a little bit about Michael.

His mother, Mary, is from the village of Kotlik in the Yukon-Kuskokwim

Delta. She is Yupik. His father, Eufemio, is from Central Mexico. So those two met and married in Anchorage, and that is where Michael was raised.

As I said, he is 21 years old now and has one more year to go before he receives his bachelor of science degree in chemistry from the University of Alaska Anchorage—a great university. Although he has been very successful so far in his already having won many awards for his research, he plans on going to graduate school. There is so much for him to study, after all, and his interest in science runs very deep, as it has since he was a young boy when he began winning science fairs.

An Alaska reporter wrote a story in 2016—so 5 years ago—already documenting then young Michael's successes. The first award was for an experiment demonstrating how weight and length affect the throwing distance of traditional hunting spears used by Alaska Natives. Isn't that a cool research topic? In eighth grade, he won an award for designing a robot.

Eventually, he moved on to bigger and better things, like, at the tender age of 16, trying to find a cure for cancer and getting mentorship from his high school teachers at Service High School in Anchorage and, very importantly, in the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program—what we call ANSEP—in Alaska. He won the Emperor Science Award, which is a prestigious science research award offered through PBS Learning Media and Stand Up to Cancer.

Michael worked with his mentor, Dr. Holly Martinson, Ph.D., from the University of Alaska Anchorage, to make a database for Alaska Natives suffering from cancer. It was his introduction to the world of research, and he fell in love with it. He entered ANSEP.

Let me talk to you a little bit about ANSEP. It is a program that attracts young Alaska Native students from all over Alaska and provides extraordinary educational opportunities for them in science, in the STEM fields. ANSEP students have been enormously successful and have gone on to do incredible, incredible things. I can't say enough about this tremendous program.

Eventually, Michael was introduced to another mentor, Dr. Brandon Briggs, a professor of biological sciences and the director of the Advanced Instrumentation for Microbiome Studies. It was his work at Dr. Briggs' lab that led him to his current passion of finding better environmentally friendly ways to extract much needed, even critical, materials from the Earth.

Increasingly, both here in Congress and across the country, we have been focusing on metals and minerals that are needed to power our future, particularly rare earth elements and critical minerals. So much of our economic future and our national defense depends upon these minerals. The problem—although we have many of these

minerals, rare earths included, in our country and particularly in Alaska—is that our mining industry has had incredibly difficult times in terms of being able to access them, whether it be with permitting delays that take years, with far-left environmental lawsuits that prohibit the extracting of them, or with the lack of production capacity. The result is that China, like it is in so many other areas, is dominant, controlling up to 90 percent of some of these critical minerals.

Like many of the challenges we face and confront with China, we need the best minds in America working on these things. Our young minds hold the promise of our future.

That is one of the reasons we recently passed a bill right here in the Senate this week to fund research institutions, so that we can unleash this talent and creativity.

This is where our Alaskan of the Week, Michael, comes in. It was recently announced that Michael won first place in the High North Young Entrepreneur Award at the High North Dialogue, an international pitch competition for Arctic-related business ideas. Here is what he won it for: forming a company with his adviser-mentor, Dr. Briggs, called Arctic Biotech Oath, which is working on sustainably extracting rare-earth elements, as I said, which are in abundance in Alaska.

How does this work? What is the science and chemistry that he is already working on? In a lab, they are using microorganisms, fungi, which dig into the ore, breaking it up, and releasing the rare-earth element into a solution, which is a more natural and sustainable process to extract these rare-earth elements.

This process is still in research and development, but it has incredible potential for our Nation and for our State, and he has founded a company that is doing this, and Michael is just 21 years old. Michael could be anywhere doing this, but he is staying in Alaska because Alaska is home, and he is committed to contributing to our State.

That is why I'm still here. And that's why the company will be here and will be based in Alaska. I was born and raised here. I am trying to improve our State and see Alaska soar and thrive within the next couple of decades. I want to see a green energy sector evolve in Alaska.

So that is Michael. He wants to be part of this, and he is part of this at the tender age of 21.

So to Michael, thanks for all your hard work.

By the way, thanks to all the mentors in Michael's life and ANSEP and UAA, which have helped him along the way.

Good luck in your endeavors, and congratulations, Michael, for being our Alaskan of the Week.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. President, since this administration—the Biden administration—came into office, I and a number of Senators,

Democrats and Republicans, have been trying to work with them on a number of important foreign policy issues, particularly as it relates to China.

The President is now in Europe, and a couple days ago, he wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post where he stated that the United States must lead the world from positions of strength.

By the way, his National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, also has made this argument. It is actually a really good argument, that the United States needs to lead the world, particularly competition with countries like Russia and China, from positions of strength. I couldn't agree with that more.

But let me just talk about two areas where we have strength relative to any other country in the world and where this administration is not reinforcing that but is undermining it. And I really, really hope they change. Let me begin with the obvious one in terms of our foreign relations and national security—the U.S. military.

We have a position of strength; there is no doubt about it. We have the finest fighting force in the world, maybe in the history of the world. We need to continue to lead with strength and value the men and women who raise their right hand and volunteer for this incredible fighting force, not with words but, most important, with actions and with funding.

Here is where this administration is clearly missing the mark. This is a breakdown of the Biden administration's blowout \$6 trillion budget. As you can see, it lays out priorities, and I think we can all agree that if you look at this chart, the military and national defense are simply not priorities. To the contrary, they are dead last in terms of this administration's priorities.

Look at this. Every Agency you can imagine—Commerce, HHS, EPA, Interior—there are double-digit—20 percent or more—increases in their budget. Where are the two national security Agencies in the Biden administration's priorities? They are down here. Actually, we see a 2-percent increase in Defense, a 0.2-percent increase in Homeland Security, but inflation is now estimated at 4.2 percent, so the numbers here are actually declines—inflation-adjusted decreases in the Department of Defense's budget and Homeland Security's budget. Dead last.

We had an Armed Services hearing today with the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs—two gentlemen I have a lot of respect for. They have a tough job because they had to come up to the Hill and pitch this budget, when I believe they didn't agree with that budget. I don't think Secretary Austin and General Milley want to cut defense spending, but guess what—that is what they had to pitch today.

In the hearing, I asked them this question. Budgets are a reflection of an administration's priority. If you look at this chart, it is clear that the Biden

administration prioritizes defense spending in our military and our national security last—dead last. So my question to them was, how can you tell our troops that we are prioritizing their mission, defending America, when it is clear, again, from this document and from the Biden administration's budget that it is dead last? To be respectful to General Milley and Secretary Austin, they didn't have a very good answer because there is no good answer. There is no good answer.

But we know that one country is prioritizing their defense spending.

I also showed General Milley and Secretary Austin this chart. This chart, if you look at it, is where the U.S. annual change in defense spending is—that is the blue—and where the Communist Party of China's annual defense spending is. That is the red.

Again, if you take a look, these big declines here, that is the second term of the Obama administration, where they cut defense spending in the United States by 25 percent. Not good. Not good for our troops. The increases here are when the Republicans had control of the U.S. Senate during the Trump administration era, when we were increasing our defense spending and increasing readiness. And now we are starting to go back to the previous Biden-Obama era of cutting defense spending. What have the Chinese been doing? Every year, at least 6 percent and sometimes 12, 13 percent.

Again, this is not being from a position of strength for the United States, as the President of the United States says we must.

Let me just make one final point in another area in terms of a position of strength. One of the other areas of our country's strength right now—and nobody disagrees with it—is in the area of energy. In the last 10 years, we have had an energy renaissance in our country, turning us into a true global superpower of energy: Largest producer of natural gas in the world; bigger than Russia. Largest producer of oil in the world; bigger than Saudi Arabia. Largest producer of renewables in the world. All of the above.

Our country has been trying to get to this point where we are the world's energy superpower—again, we were in this position during World War II—for the last several decades, and this has always been a bipartisan endeavor. Jimmy Carter wanted energy independence, and so did every other President before and after him, and we are there.

But we are on the cusp of seeing this enormous strategic advantage to our Nation, to working families, to our environment, disappear. Why? Because the Biden administration is restricting energy production in America, is having senior officials like John Kerry and Gina McCarthy go to Wall Street and tell our Wall Street executives: Don't invest in the energy sector, and they are stopping the permitting of pipelines where we need to move our energy. In fact, the President is fine with

killing the Keystone Pipeline and the 10,000 jobs that go with it but is approving the Russian Nord Stream Pipeline. That is a gift to President Putin.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a Wall Street Journal editorial today entitled "America's Energy Gift to Dictators."

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal]

AMERICA'S ENERGY GIFT TO DICTATORS

(By The Editorial Board)

China, Russia and Iran will exploit the U.S. retreat on fossil fuels:

The U.S. is barreling toward one of the greatest self-inflicted wounds in its history. This came into sharper focus last week when President Biden suspended oil leases in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), even as Russia and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced production increases.

Mr. Biden's anti-carbon fusillade will have no effect on the climate as global demand for fossil fuel will continue to increase for decades no matter what the U.S. does. Meantime, Russia, China and Iran will take advantage of America's astonishing fossil-fuel retreat.

Not long ago, the U.S. depended on OPEC for much of its oil supply. But hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling enabled producers to extract oil and natural gas once believed unrecoverable. Shale frackers from North Dakota to Texas unleashed a surge of oil and gas onto global markets, breaking OPEC's dominance on supply. OPEC tried to break U.S. producers by flooding markets, but frackers became more efficient. By 2019 the U.S. was producing nearly two-and-a-half times as much crude as in 2008. OPEC and Russia have had to limit their production to lift prices to shore up budgets that depend on petrodollars.

U.S. producers reduced investment during the pandemic as demand plunged. While prices have since recovered to a two-year high, a larger U.S. retrenchment driven by government and progressive investors is on the way.

Two weeks ago the hedge fund Engine No. 1 allied with big asset managers, government pension fund and proxy advisers ousted three Exxon Mobil board members in a climate proxy battle. Shareholders also passed a resolution requiring Chevron to reduce its downstream emissions. The latter is a de facto mandate to withdraw from oil and gas.

America's big banks have red-lined U.S. coal companies and refused to finance oil projects in ANWR, which the 2017 GOP tax reform opened up to development. Now the Biden Administration is trying to wall off the Arctic again as it launches a regulatory assault on fossil fuels—from tighter emission rules to endangered-species protections.

The anti-carbon left says the U.S. must banish fossil fuels to meet the Paris goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial temperatures. This is incompatible with a worldwide population that is expected to grow by two billion by 2050. It would require an enormous reorganization of the global economy that would keep billions in poverty.

Electric vehicles would have to make up 60% of worldwide car sales by 2030, according to a recent International Energy Agency report. "You have 800 million people who do not have access to electricity. You can't say that they have to go to net zero [carbon]. They have to develop," Indian Minister of

New and Renewable Energy Raj Kumar Singh said in March.

Unless there is some technology breakthrough, demand for fossil fuels will continue to grow for decades. And Russia and China will take advantage of U.S. energy disarmament. Russian oil giant Rosneft warned last fall that retrenchment by U.S. and European companies would result in higher prices and shortages. "Someone will need to step in," Rosneft senior executive Didier Casimiro said.

In November Rosneft announced a \$170 billion oil and gas project in Russia's north, which it claims can supply the entire world's oil demand for a year. It says the project will become the world's largest liquefied natural gas producer by 2030. Russia is also laying down thousands of miles of oil and gas pipelines to supply Europe and Asia.

Vladimir Putin is gloating that Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline to Germany will soon be finished, as Mr. Biden has refused to sanction Russian companies running the project. But he didn't care about upsetting Canada when he killed the Keystone XL pipeline. Nor Alaskans when he suspended the ANWR leases. Mr. Biden wants to curtail North American energy development while he stands by as Russia uses its natural resources for strategic gain.

That includes coal, by the way. Russia is spending more than \$10 billion on railroad upgrades to boost its coal exports. According to a new report by the Global Energy Monitor, coal producers—in Australia, China, India, Russia and South Africa—are planning mining projects that would increase global output by 30%. China has 112 coal mines under construction. It is also developing shale.

Progressives want to surrender one of America's major strategic economic advantages in the name of saving the climate. But banishing fossil fuels in the U.S. won't eliminate carbon emissions, which will be produced somewhere else. So will the jobs, economic growth and geopolitical leverage.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, here is how this excellent editorial begins:

The U.S. is barreling toward one of the greatest self-inflicted wounds in our country's history.

I could not agree more.

The editorial goes on to list the different actions that I just mentioned—restricting energy production in America, including in Alaska, with ANWR, restricting pipelines, encouraging defunding of the energy sector. It is not good for the country.

The editorial also notes that this will have no impact on global greenhouse gas emissions. None. None. It is virtue signaling at the expense of working families, working Americans, and our national security.

Right now, we are beginning to import more oil from Russia than we ever have. How does that make any sense? How does that help a working family in Alaska or Maryland or anywhere? It doesn't. It does one thing: It empowers countries like Russia and Putin and Saudi Arabia at the expense of the United States. This is a fact. Yet, every day you hear a new action. You read a new quote from someone in this administration focused on killing the energy sector of the United States. Again, as the Wall Street Journal just mentioned, this will be recognized in history as one of the greatest self-in-

flicted wounds, with no upside. No upside.

We have the highest environmental standards in the world in Alaska when we produce oil. Highest in the world. Russians have the lowest, and yet we are now preferring Russian oil over American oil.

Can anyone tell me how this makes sense? It doesn't.

Here is how the editorial concludes:

Progressives want to surrender one of America's [most] strategic economic advantages in the name of [so-called] saving the climate. But banishing fossil fuels in the [United States] won't eliminate carbon emissions, which will [just] be produced [elsewhere]. So will . . . jobs [and] economic growth and [the] geopolitical [advantage that comes with our energy dominance].

Let me conclude by saying this. As I mentioned, I agree with President Biden and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. We need to address challenges, particularly with our adversaries like China and Russia, from positions of strength. Two of the most prominent positions of strength—the U.S. military and our energy dominance—right now are being undermined by this very administration.

They need to change course, and if they do, we will support their actions. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

COVID-19 VACCINES

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I rise today to say thank you. I rise today to say thank you to President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken. They have both announced today, though it had been rumored for several days, that the United States of America is about to make available 500 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine to our friends and neighbors across the world. And I hope the President and the Secretary are willing to offer even more, if necessary.

We have learned a lot about the virus and the disease that it causes. I will mention three things. No. 1, we have learned that the virus came from China; No. 2, we have learned that the best vaccines for the virus came from the United States of America; and No. 3, we have learned that the pandemic is not over.

Yes, things are better in the United States. And we are so blessed in that regard, and I am so thankful. That is a combination of Americans receiving the vaccine; it is a combination of Americans being careful in their behavior. Our coronavirus rates are a combination of people who contracted the disease and therefore have the antibodies, and that is why our numbers are going down, and we are also thankful for that.

But that is not the situation in other parts of the world. If you go to South America, if you go to Central America, if you ask anyone—if you ask Sub-Saharan Africa about how things are going in terms of the pandemic, it is alive and well and raging. And our friends and neighbors need the help,

and I am grateful today that President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken are going to make that help available.

For a couple of reasons, it makes sense to show the world what U.S. leadership really means. No. 1, it is the right thing to do. It is the moral thing to do. We developed a vaccine. We need to share it. That doesn't mean that we have to require pharmaceutical companies to share their patented and protected information. I think that is a real mistake. We can accomplish everything through licensing agreements. But we do need to share.

No. 2, this makes sense in terms of our national security. It is not the most important reason to do this but in terms of national security and the rest of our neighbors throughout the world understanding that the American people are generous and that we help other folks when they are down.

No. 3, it makes sense for the President and the Secretary to do this in terms of geopolitical terms. China is trying to do the same thing that we are going to do in terms of making vaccines available throughout the world. And I thank China for that, and I thank the Chinese people. The Chinese people are wonderful people. Their leadership, not so much.

The Chinese people—let me say it again—the people of China are wonderful. The leadership of the Communist Party of China is a bunch of pirates. But I am thankful they are willing to make vaccines available. The problem is, they are making their own vaccine available, which is inferior to the American vaccine, and, No. 2, in many cases, their vaccine diplomacy—"their" meaning, of course, the Chinese Communist Party's vaccine diplomacy—is tied to conditions.

Yes, says the Chinese Communist Party, we will share our vaccine with you if you will help us take over Taiwan. Yes, we will share our vaccine with you, say members of the Communist Party of China, if you will join with us in saying that the Communist Party of China is doing nothing wrong in hiding the origin of the coronavirus.

That is not what we are doing.

Our gift, as Americans, to the rest of the world is unconditional. It is firm. It is categorical. It is the moral thing to do. It is the smart thing to do, in terms of our own national security. We can't completely recover until the world recovers. And No. 3, it makes perfect sense, in my judgment, in explaining to the rest of the world the difference between communism and the free enterprise system and the hearts that lie behind both of those systems.

It is also, and I will close on this point—it is necessary. There are very few countries in the world—we are blessed to be one of them—that have the ability to manufacture, to store, and to distribute the vaccine. Yes, it is wonderful to talk about, well, we are going to help other countries with their—let's say, their manufacturing needs. We should do that, but we don't